Interview with Mr. Maurice Ratner
Conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson
and Mrs. Emily Lawton - April 29, 1982

Contains some Jewish history in the valley.

TAPE #2 - SIDE 1 & 2

RATNER: Well, I'm the one they talk to when they ask about Jewish history.

DODSON: Well, I'm glad to came to the right place then.

RATNER: Well, I get them started and then I correct whatever they come up with that I think isn't authentic.

DODSON: Well, I'll tell you a little Jewish history maybe you don't know. We think that Lankershim was originally Lankershiem and that he was originally Jewish and then converted. Had you heard that?

RATNER: I heard that so...

DODSON: I see. I thought maybe you don't know there.

RATNER: The fact is I have a son in-law who stopped in, he lives right close by, he stopped in your office and you told it him and he told it to me.

DODSON: Is that right? Here I thought I was giving you some Jewish history.

RATNER: That's why...in your school you have what? The Department of Information or what is it that you have?

DODSON: Not exactly but we have a little museum.

RATNER: A museum?

DODSON: Yes, and Emily and I run the museum and so we're making these tapes of the history of the valley and making a collection of them in the museum so we will have a history of the valley.

RATNER: Is this full time or part time.

DODSON: Part time.

RATNER: Part time but the museum is there...

DODSON: For the community. Anyone in the community can make use of it.

LAWTON: I'm a full time student there and that was part of my...?

RATNER: So during the '20s that was prohibition and one of our Italian family moved they always got grapes around and those grapes and stuff and we ? this family, in fact it's still there, the next time you want to see if Whitsett. There's still a house, a few planting rocks and so on. And so that's the young people move in but originally this house was down in, it was sort of a gully like, private road and had grapes and had this big room downstairs where supposedly ? but actually what it was it was like a night club. If I recall in those days it was called...

DODSON: Speak easy, you think?

RATNER: ? been called a...there were different names. They weren't bootleggers. Bootleggers was whiskey. Mr. ? just like in Hawaii, beer and wine ? So ? and this is where they lived and then you went down in sort of a closed and you could only go there and stop. You couldn't go any further. Well, now here we come along and then came the depression. And the depression booze came out and prohibition was out. So there was this building, and he sold the house and ? so we saw it and we came along and this is how we bought it and converted that into a synagogue. That's how we...?

DODSON: That's interesting.

LAWTON: That's wonderful...?

RATNER: This is how we started the first one and I was 15...before then we use to meet just at different places like around ? city.

LAWTON: What did you use the upper house for, did you use that for like the ?

RATNER: The upstairs we made we put like the sanctuary and seats and so on and downstairs was the meeting hall and ? and so on. The only problem we had to buy a pump because when it rained, see the rain would come through and we had to pump the water out of it because it was a cellar. And then we...the Italian family ? there was always a cellar - they had a big cellar ? That was part of their deal. So that's the beginning of the first... I told you I mentioned the second how we started the Salvation Army.

DODSON: Now you mentioned that you have to have ten people to have a service. Do you remember some of the names of that original ten? And whether or not any of them still live in the valley?

RATNER: Yes, yes. The ones that are...I have this ? I have to get that because I can't just...

DODSON: Off hand you haven't thought of it lately probably.

RATNER: I mean I got it down. In fact, it's a strange thing, most people are trained to remember names and things and I trained myself to forget names.

DODSON: Most people don't have to practice on that.

LAWTON: I'm good at that.

RATNER: How I happened to...I took pharmacy, you know, pharmacy you just get two books. You got to remember the name of every drug. You got to remember the name and then the Latin name. You got to remember the dose and you got to remember how much it cost ? you got to remember those names. That was ? go to school you enjoy certain organizations. So I...they call that the Trojan Knight they had at that time. ? And your job and your fraternity, obviously you go around visiting every fraternity house. So on your lunch time...you come in lunch time, you have lunch, and then you get there early. The president of that fraternity would be right there at the door and as they come in, 20-

30 or 40 for lunch and sit down. Well, you shake hands, meet them and as I say, you have lunch. And as you go out you must say goodbye Jim, Joe and John and why Larry it's nice to see you and so on. And you train yourself. Joe, he wore a tie without a tie or a tie, it didn't work. One who wore this, I use to try to connect something, one was...and you get so you remember and you eat lunch and remember their names or yours to the ? So that was training to remember and that was wonderful...see. Besides that training I still had to remember the name of the drugs till later on. So the mind becomes trained...that's good. The only problem was in those days when you went to school, you'd take one class on the second floor and the next class in the other building and one between. You run down the street, you say, "Who's that? Joe or John or Larry." You know, "Who's this one." You shake hands and the first thing I know I said, I can't remember everybody's name. I can't even remember where I'm going. So I trained myself not to...when I got through with being a Trojan Knight I said I don't remember people's names, it doesn't mean anything. Then on top of it, like where I stayed at this fraternity house they had a...the telephone company had a telephone company and their headquarters had a ? In those days they use to have

a lot of telephone operators. It wasn't automatic. They used a lot of girls and they were right there, 30-40 girls were right there in the city. It was just around the corner from the fraternity house. You see, it was on Hoover Street near USC. I had a car and I had a car because I wouldn't ? corner every day. Not too many had cars in those days. So in a emergency they knew me and she wanted to go and she wanted to go there. And the first thing I knew the 40, I didn't know them all, but I knew different ones and so on. You see that was a job to remember what their name was Jane or Joan or Mary or Marley or Marlene or whatever. So I said you know I'm going to call everybody sugar face or something like that.

DODSON: Well, you were quite right about one thing I think that you specialized in learning a particular type of thing and not others. Now I have a good memory for historical names but not for names that are historical because that's where I've trained my memory for, you see. History, that's right.

RATNER: We were talking about religion. Well religion was one thing that did take place during the depression. Things were rough and tough and so on and when the thing started out, the good side we remember we

mentioned "technocrats" that's what encouraged the other side. And we also mentioned "silver shirts". We wore silver shirts.

DODSON: That was sort of a Nazi, Klu Klux Klan type of thing, wasn't it?

RATNER: Remember this was in the '30s, there was no nazis then.

DODSON: No, they didn't exist. But wasn't that some kind of a klu klux...extreme...

RATNER: KKK, that was the junior. So it started out with the junior because the juniors already... When they first came they had silver shirts...they formed different places. And that only cost $3 or $5 to join but then you started seeing... And then came the Klu Klux Klan. They started all of this.

LAWTON: You had that in the valley?

RATNER: Oh yeah. The headquarters was right out here. Right here in Sunland and Sunland Avenue. Well, they had a big cross and the klu klux and they'd burn this and that. But then in Van Nuys they use to meet right off of Van Nuys Blvd., there was a

union hall, the Carriage House, some hall and that's where they use to meet up there to ? And anyways, it's okay, meet wherever they want but what they did...what they did was this...you see today, we have stop and go signals and so on. But we always had stop signs on major corners. You know if you got a sign you'd stop, at a stop, say along Ventura Blvd. and certain main streets. And on those streets, KIGY. The letters were that big. ? Did anybody mention that to you?

DODSON: No, no. In fact, I never heard you mention that.

RATNER: I told you...I don't know if I mentioned it. It was actually on this side of the valley, there was nobody around. They use to be in Burbank. They were here before the first World War and the second World War, you know we timed this. ? It just happens...the only reason I started ? the newspapers is I got around and saw everything. KIGY, that was the thing you see.

LAWTON: Did they paint that...the Klu Klux Klan they painted on.

RATNER: Yeah, they painted it in the street. All over.

LAWTON: What did it mean?

RATNER: And that for anybody that was knew of anybody, especially Jewish or personally there were no blacks. Talking about blacks, there was a young black from Northridge. He was taking some kind of a course, either he wanted History II ? I said if you know about the blacks, the history of the blacks in the valley and you know when I started telling him about...even he didn't know about the blacks in the valley. Anyways, coming back to KIGY. It was "Clansmen, I greet you." And that was on all...wherever there was a stop sign. They painted that all around the valley. Otherwise they wanted to know if they were here. And in those days police couldn't chase them out or the city didn't have no money to send them ? And this was all over. In mean time, like I mentioned most Jewish moved out here, there use to be business in San Fernando he use to live there and picked up and moved into town. Cause I tell my dad, "Look," I say, "we should move because even one friend...I had a young friend came and he said, "Morton, I got to tell you. Your one of my best friends. And we had a meeting last night and we decided there shouldn't be any jews or blacks in the valley." There was no blacks to kick out anyway. So I tell my dad that and he says, "This is

America and you got police and these are crazy people, a lot of them." And he said, "You don't pay no attention. You stay right here. You don't worry about it." Because he was that type. He wasn't afraid of nobody. But that was...nobody mentioned to you KIGY?

DODSON: No, nobody has. So this is new to us.

RATNER: But that was...outside of that, there was no... Another thing about those days, we talk about Protestants, they go wherever it is and they use the open what they call the Community Church. And then most of them were Methodists. But Community Churches were the thing they'd start with. But most of the Catholics...where there was a mission, there would always be a Catholic church around there. Because in those days, the Catholics, they wanted their children to go into the Catholic school, it had to be around the church. So there was one in Burbank but there were none out here. It wasn't until later on when the late '20s came a Spanish one, right here a little building, a little store. We had a little Spanish settlement here in '20s, that's all. And then later we got a Catholic church here.

DODSON: Well, wasn't the Klu Klux Klan opposed to the Catholics too?

RATNER: Well yeah. All that they did was meet.

DODSON: There wasn't any really unpleasant things happening in the valley then?

RATNER: No, there was no...there were no riots. Or they didn't go out beating up anybody but they did... Okay, what else were we...

LAWTON: So your family was not affected by the Klu Klux Klan except that they did meet?

RATNER: No, they didn't bother anybody. I mean they just marched or met. Just talk but they didn't go out and disturb anybody.

DODSON: Well that's good.

RATNER: They didn't mark up the church and they didn't mark any place. There was no synagogue over there anyways but they didn't. That was just a means of selling membership and selling sheets or whatever they had to sell is all.

DODSON: Did you feel that there was anti-semitism in the valley? Were you conscious of anything like that?

RATNER: No. In those days, in fact a lot of people didn't know, hadn't met any jews and didn't know jewish...a lot of them weren't cognizant of who was jewish or who wasn't jewish. Because you had especially people who come from the middle west and around and so on. But those that were some naturally or born or raised being anti-jewish or anti-everything. And then others naturally...some churches were more so than others. A priest...this goes back...actually when I remember when I was a little kid, back east, Protestant kids would go by a Catholic church and there was that feeling, a jew, Protestants and Catholics, jews or blacks or whatever it was, but that was to be expected. It was nothing radical.

DODSON: I see. Did you feel that there were any sort of minority troubles or racial feeling of any kind in the valley in relation to other peoples?

RATNER: No, there was the Mexicans, they usually had groups in San Fernando...there was a big Mexican population there, the Mission, the church and so on. Right here we had the ? group right here with maybe about 50-60 little houses here. A store and a little

church, that's all. There was no fearing minorities. Originally, of course this goes way back, it was before our time...the Chinese are the ones that did the labor.

DODSON: They worked on the railroad, didn't they?

RATNER: Not so much railroad. They did farm work and ? one thing or another. Up in Newhall, Saugus and through there and way back in around the ? counties there were a lot of Chinese would come too. The Chinese laundries use to be very popular the Chinese laundries and things. The Chinese house boys and cooks but there never was no anti or minority problems here.

DODSON: So you feel the valley was pretty free of that type of expression?

RATNER: As far as blacks, they were known to stay out. They didn't...the only blacks that...there was one that started up here between Sun Valley and some right in Pacoima. He was going to bring them out and subdivided and sold ? But they stopped. They didn't go ahead with that. Up here in Kagel Canyon. Do you know where Kagel Canyon is?

DODSON: I know where that is.

RATNER: Do you know where the cemetery is through here? Well, right in there. Up canyon he had there about six or eight black families. There's still a couple of them there, they own property. So they were up there and they didn't bother anybody. ? They had a couple interested in why they moved up here but neighbors got them out right away. There's always...in North Hollywood a couple started to move.

LAWTON: Did the families themselves not want to be here? Did the families themselves not want to live here, the black families?

RATNER: Didn't want black people. All property was sold that way. You could only sell property to people of the white Caucasian race. You don't see...we came here...my dad had five acres and he had a citrus grove up here. So there was days to get help on it...in those days Japanese. Japanese contract labor. A lot of Japanese came over and there use to having groups. And the young Japanese, if he needed five or ten Japanese, he'd bring them over and they would work and pay the boss so much. This is the way you contract labor. Just like they do today on

the ranches with Mexican labor they do that see. But in those days it was Japanese. And the Japanese stayed and they went into the florist...flowers. They raised nursery flower business, landscaping and then they stayed in landscaping. And then all their children have gone to professional schools, doctors ? You don't see no more Japanese in landscaping.

DODSON: No, I suppose they are as say, pretty well out of that.

RATNER: And the one we had, Cummings lived out here, we had him for almost 30-35 years he has been our gardener. But he had six sons and a daughter. So all six sons have become professional people.

DODSON: Yes, I guess the Japanese have gone in for education. For a ? degree. And many of them are very good students too.

RATNER: Oh yeah. In fact, Randolph Hearst, he passed the law. He got the laws for legislation, the Japanese couldn't buy land here in California. You knew that didn't you?

LAWTON: No. When was that?

RATNER: That was in the '20s either before the war or right after the war.

DODSON: Yes, I know there was discrimination against them in that way in California.

LAWTON: I knew that they had been put in the camps but I didn't know...

RATNER: Well that was after the second World War. But way back in the '20s, they children if they were a citizens could buy but not the parents, they couldn't buy land.

DODSON: Were there many Japanese in the valley at the time of the second World War, Japanese that were put in these camps?

RATNER: Yeah, there were quite a few. Most of them had gardening, you know they had farms and other... Oh yeah.

LAWTON: So most of them went into the camps then? Did a lot of them go into the camps?

RATNER: Oh yeah, they all went into the camps. In a way they were glad to go. You know a lot of them were

glad to go because it was a strange atmosphere then. You see the Japanese never mixed much with the...the children they kept in their own schools, they didn't send them to public schools. And the schools they had, the Japanese were pretty smart, they planned way ahead. And the teachers would use the army people from Japan. And you know Tokoyo they had down there, that was also...it's a long story. It wasn't all one sided. And I wouldn't say they were necessarily spies but they had pictures of everything and they knew everything that was going on and so on, you see. That was the thing that upset them and why some little store that didn't do a little business, why that would be the next General from Japan. And why this place is known also right from Japan, why is he?, see there was all going on? And schools and then the parents themselves wouldn't discuss any type and everything else. And the Japanese newspapers only printed so much. So that was one situation. And the other situation was here they came with some submarine and they sent...they bombed the other side of Oxnard, where the oil field was. The Japanese stop anything. So if one little Japanese and dropped one little bomb and everybody thought they were going to blow up the whole coast. After...I think that submarine happened to get lost. So that was number

? and the second that any of those radicals and the family there...in a way they were glad. The only thing they felt bad, if they had to give up what they had. You know they had to give up their business and sell everything and go. But actually they felt safe there, especially the older people.

DODSON: That's what I have read. That there's that side of it that we don't talk about, that this protected them too.

RATNER: You see you can't turn around and say that Japan sent half of Tokoyo...half of little Tokoyo was out spying. You can't say that, you can't tell them that the grocery man was a spy, you can't say that. So this is actually what happened. Especially the school teachers that they had. Because they found pictures of showing of everything. Strange how I happened to...remember I mentioned I was a druggist in a drug store. I had a friend who was an auctioneer and he auctioned off a lot of property in little Tokyo, stores and things. He had...there was a lot of little drug stores and I don't why they used so many stores and a lot of these druggists were from Japan. It was a front like...and so I'd go down and when it came to drug stores he would always have me come to look at a store and so on.

And he told me, I'm telling you what actually happened. But thank God it turned out alright. Nobody was hurt during the camps and the only sad part about it is financially that went on. But they come out it. Listen, they sent their children to school and worked hard. They didn't call for government relief or help.

DODSON: Well, apparently then we in the valley had a pretty good record as far as treatment of minorities and that sort of thing.

RATNER: There wasn't necessarily problems.

DODSON: Emily, do you have some things you'd like to ask about that we haven't covered?

LAWTON: What kind of clothing did you wear? Was it a lot different than there is now?

RATNER: Clothing?

DODSON: Clothing. She wants to know if fashions were different? Clothing was different?

RATNER: Well that's something you have. You have to look at old pictures.

LAWTON: Did you like it better than you do now? The way people dressed?

RATNER: Well, dress changes...you know it always changes. Three years ago you wore long collars and we're back to the short collars and that's the style and next year it will be without a tie and you know. It's a challenge. When I was a little kid the kids use to watch women's...who wore they called...I bet you haven't even seen a picture of "hobble skirts" they called them.

LAWTON: Hobble skirts? That I haven't heard.

RATNER: They were just as tight as they could be. ? they couldn't...you'd think they got into a pair of pants almost it was just as tight. That was the first...then they wear big hats and stuff. And then they keep changing, all sorts of different things.

LAWTON: Do you have your favorite, your favorite style that women wore through the years? Do you have any particular period you liked better than others personally?

RATNER: Well, naturally your here in California you think of casual whenever it fits. You should be comfortable

and enjoy whatever there wearing. And you'd see that you have a nice outfit. Whatever they enjoy to wear casually.

LAWTON: How about food? Was your eating habits different than it is now? With the type of food available.

RATNER: Well, naturally they didn't have all the prepared foods that... What actually if you had time you should have a write-up about this Dr. Hansen.

DODSON: Yes. We would be very glad to have any information about him. Since our ban is for the valley.

RATNER: ? so that would be another thing. You could have, of course you'd have trouble write...being near Roscoe, that's our...it's called Sun Valley...that's our fifth name that we had in the town.

DODSON: Can you give the others for us. All of the names...

RATNER: So it's had five names.

DODSON: What was the earliest one, do you recall?

RATNER: The oldest one? It's called Boeing and the oldest one was called Dundee, California.

DODSON: Dundee and then what did it change to?

RATNER: Then Dundee came and then Roberts, California. That was...you had this storm and that's before the first World War and you had a post office in this area. And it's called Roberts, California.

DODSON: And then what did Roberts become?

RATNER: Then when the war came along, the government said we can't afford these little post offices, we have to combine them. So we got the mail here from Burbank, California. We didn't belong to Burbank but the post office came from Burbank but that wasn't the name of the town. We didn't have a name. Well, we were still named Roberts because that was the name of the town. But then in the meantime, this you'll want to see...I get off the subject but...

DODSON: That's alright you go right ahead.

RATNER: The railroad came just 100 years ago they put in the railroad. What they had, they didn't have telephones or radios, they had telegraph you know and those things. So the brakeman had to sit down and telegraph or something and when he'd get to this station he had telegraph something. So they'd say,

"Well, where are you at?" So he'd say, "Burbank, I'm so far from Burbank." "Well, where are you at in Burbank?" So they called it the crossings, they'd put a name on the crossing. Every mile or two miles, they'd put a name on the crossing. So when they'd telegraph they'd say, "I'm at so-and-so." Now the railroad in those days they had railroad cars and passenger cars, freight cars had a number on them, each one. On the railroad car they had a name on each one of them. It was called Gloria, Florence, Lorraine, girl's names. So when you got off the train to go into Harley's for lunch. You'd got to remember where you put your bag, you got to run to the station and went back there, you want to know what train, you couldn't remember numbers so you remembered "Lorraine" and you'd look for Lorraine. That was the passenger stop. Going back to this brakeman we were talking about when he to telegraph where you were at...so it had to be a name. So they gave names, short names, various names on this street now. When you started out, like I mentioned it was tropical, then it became Glendale and so on and then they named Burbank. ? it was called Turkey Crossing. ? They had a sign called Dundee...Dundee was down here and then they named town Dundee. And the crossing over here they had Roscoe at that time. Then called it Drista,

then further out they had Pacoima. You know later they changed the name...before it was called Pacoima. Then between Pacoima and San Fernando they called Wahoo. A sign and a picture called Wahoo. This is how they designated for the brakeman to know where...they usually had short names. ? So now coming back to the five names. You see you always got to come back to where we started.

DODSON: That's right.

LAWTON: It's very interesting.

RATNER: So after the first World War and the mail came from Burbank and now Roberts, no more post office Roberts, but everybody knew by the name of the crossing, it's Roscoe. And here's Roscoe. And so when we ever we got that post they called post office inspectors and when the inspector came out and he says, "Well, we have no more office post office. What are you going to call it?" They use to call it Roscoe. And then we were Roscoe, California. So that was are...instead of Roberts. It was Roscoe, that was our third name. So it stayed Roscoe for a long time.

DODSON: Well, now was it the railroad then that gave us the name Roscoe.

RATNER: Roscoe was the name of the city...no, the Roscoe name crossing Roscoe. So when they put up a, show you a picture there, a railroad station. If I was there I could show you a lot of pictures. So they put the name Roscoe there because it said Roscoe. This was called Roscoe, California. In the meantime, remember I mentioned J.C. Crawford a long time ago, he was the mayor of Burbank. ? And he would try to build up the thing. It built himself a beautiful colonial home I remember, a two-story right out in Hollywood Way and they had what they called or first started, airplanes. This was after the second World War. You know airplanes started little factories. On San Fernando Road in Burbank. There was Kitner and another...and we needed an airport. Our airport was in Culver City. In other words, if you came from Chicago or you came from a place to get an airplane you'd be a small airplane and you'd land in Culver City. There was an airport right there. That was no good because it was too small and too crowded and this and that. So in the meantime he was trying to get up more factories. So there was a company up in Seattle, it was called Boeing. So he invited Mr. Boeing to come down here.

So Mr. Boeing came down here and he was going to get him to build a factory down in...branch factory or something. So Boeing stayed ? showed him ? his land ? he liked the land. So he sold it. So he said that would be a pretty good place. To put up a branch factory and make a place for the planes to land. So that was the first airport, called Boeing Airport. So this one in Culver City, they wouldn't land there no more. Today we have the Los Angeles, what do you call it?

DODSON: International.

RATNER: International. What's the short name for it called?

DODSON: LAX.

RATNER: Today we have LAX. Instead of this one called the city, we had Boeing Airport. That was where they...that was all the planes landed right here. He fixed that all...built that building. The same one that's there now. One of the entrances there. One of the offices there. That's the one he built right there. And this was the airport right here, it was called the ? That gave a lot of publicity because anybody in Burbank, in Glendale, anybody in Pasadena, anybody in Saugus or San Pedro...if they

wanted to go back east, they had to come to the Boeing Airport. And here we're next door to the Boeing Airport. It's almost walking distance. And we call it Roscoe. Nobody knows where Roscoe is so now we change the name to Boeing, California. So you got the post office there now, now it's Boeing, California. So took out drug store, changing the stationery, getting ready to change the signs and everything to Boeing, California. Boeing, California is right here so everybody will know we're Boeing, California. I don't know what happened, if Mrs. Boeing decided she didn't like it down here or he decided he's going back, they're going back to Seattle and he's turning it over to the company. It's called United Aircraft. So then they changed the name to United Airport. They took down the signs Boeing and they changed it to United. And hell, they want to change the name to United, call it United. So he said, so he called back the post office inspector and he told them, "We ought to change our name back to Roscoe because the people already knew what Roscoe was. He says, "You got to make up your mind just what you're going to change...change it to Roscoe." It stayed that way till Roscoe, until people started changing the names in the valley. Lankershim and North Hollywood. From Runnymeade, they changed it Canoga Park. It

kept changing. From Gerrard they changed it to what?

DODSON: Woodland Hills.

RATNER: Everybody started changing the name. So he said we got to change our name to Roscoe and changed it. So that's five names. That's the name we have now.

DODSON: Speaking of the airports. Do you remember the Grand Central Airport?

RATNER: Oh yeah, that was in Glendale.

DODSON: Yes. Now that ones defunct. There's investors...

RATNER: What happened there, it had become valuable at this airport and they built industry buildings and stuff. And then they got too small for the airplanes to land. Because the airplanes got bigger, it got too small.

DODSON: Now we hear complaints about the noise from Burbank Airport. Does that bother you here?

RATNER: No, no. ? There's just some planes that come in certain times of the day. That fly low in North

Hollywood or Van Nuys but it doesn't bother. But a lot people you heard more than others. You hear planes and all sorts of things. That's another story. Talking about correcting things. I was to a lunch. Got to go, it's after 5:00.

DODSON: We've been keeping you too long.

RATNER: But the union. They'll expel you from the union.

LAWTON: What union? I don't belong to one with this job.

DODSON: In other words, you see I misuse Emily all the time, making her work long hours and times she didn't expect and all that sort of thing.

LAWTON: You pre-warned me.

RATNER: It's an interesting story. Today there's a lot of industry in the valley. You know how industry first got started here or where it got started. That's really interesting. But actually you mentioned where we come...you come the only industry in the valley at that particular time. There was a family that made organs.

DODSON: That was the Robert Morgan Organ Company. Yes.

RATNER: Yes. And they were in Van Nuys. And there was no longer ? and they stayed there ? outside of the canneries that I mentioned to you. Canneries and walnuts ? and closed during the year ? of stuff. But for industry there was only in Van Nuys. And then there was the rock crushers. You see out here the rock crushers, they were there. Then there was Universal Studio out here. The Universal Studio that started with somebody there making pictures and stuff. And that was all...there was no industry. After 60 years being active and go on and on, there's a lot to tell.

DODSON: You see I don't worry about those things because I just let Emily make the decisions and then I don't have to worry about it.

LAWTON: Gee, thanks.

RATNER: Some of these things that I mentioned no very few mentioned or know about it. There actually there was no industry in the valley. In other words, if people wanted to work, you worked on the farm or raise chickens or helping on a house or store or something like that. But outside of that there was no work. They had to go into town. And all the factories was right downtown, all the factories were

on the east side of town. Or out in ? But anyways, see the street car use to run out here, the PE. It ran through Los Angeles, Glendale and stopped at Burbank. And there was one line that went through North Hollywood, and went to San Fernando out in the valley and so on. In those days we had really had transportation. Better than they'll ever have again, you know. And you know how that came about.

DODSON: You mean the Burbing?

RATNER: No who brought this...don't forget it was only a quarter or something. You broke this?

DODSON: Well you had M.H. Sherman who was mixed up in that. With the building of the PE and some say that one reason they brought it out was because they wanted to sell lots for real estate.

RATNER: You have to ask somebody that...that's why I'm saying it keeps changing...just like out here people say oh the town they named Roscoe, the railroad named Roscoe or whatever it is, and they say his grandfather's name or the bandit or all sorts of things. People bring up the PE, there was in the state of California, Hearst was born, his father was...he had the newspapers...he was the top man.

Heart...they had a senator, senator...it can't come to me right now...they two were the political in the state and the other one the man was the Southern Pacific and these three ran California, the town. Now on the Southern Pacific the man had made and started the Southern Pacific and he made a lot of money in those days. A different story and as I say he made a lot of money and his name was Huntington.

LAWTON: Oh, Huntington Library.

RATNER: Huntington Library. He made a lot of money. So now then he wanted to do something for people. He would make a lot of money. Put in a hospital or do something. He wanted to do something to perpetuate besides the library. So he figured they need a transportation system because that was his business. Transportation. And he wanted...so he brought this here PE all over. He pulled right down on 6th and Main Street and from there trains ran all over the county. The beach and all over the thing. ? And people were very happy and so on and so forth. Okay. Now then we start talking about industry and about the valley and start to tell you. Anways that kept going then came later on, I can't remember just the year or so on, but things were pretty rough, the depression and so on but he kept going. He wasn't

there to make money on this PE. He kept it to break even. But I just imagine running a thing like that just to break even. This was what he wanted to do for unity or for the world or for himself or whatever, he wanted to do that, and he kept it going. In the meantime, there were three companies. One was Firestone, that sold Firestone tires. The Standard Oil Company was selling gasoline. And that's all they wanted to do was sell more gasoline and then there was a company called General Motors. That started going making his own trucks and buses. Now they figured out there could be no better customer than besides they figured the street cars had been running already for 40 years so now maybe it's time to change the...you know we'll modernize everything, so will do away with busing and we'll do away with street cars and will come along with buses. So wherever the street car ran between North Hollywood and Van Nuys...you know it use to run like every hour and cost $.30, the buses came along all of a sudden and they came twice every hour and then it would cost you $.25 and this is what it is. So he went along, so somebody cut this ? the PE down and cut this line but finally things got tough and ? Now if you notice the tracks are certain places. You'll see tracks like on Chandler, you'll see railroad tracks. Southern Pacific of the PE got the

right away, the PE got a right away for that...this is already 70 years ago. 70 years ago they got a right away from the city or state or whatever county and everything else to run this railroad tracks through there see. And now the PE was part of the...Mr. Huntington owned some ? he owned this. So you see the PE is gone. Southern Pacifc you could see once a day a railroad car go or come from Van Nuys, you could see it coming from North Hollywood up on the tressel.

DODSON: Yes, it comes right across by our college.

RATNER: That's to keep the...that's the story...right to the college. That's the story of the PE. These three companies, they should get the credit. They should be awarded the credit for putting the PE out of business. The Firestone Company, General Motors and how selfish they were. How selfish they were to destroy...those three companies, they come right out. Those are the three companies they are the ones that destroyed the Pacific ?

DODSON: Well I knew that General Motors was mixed up in...

RATNER: Alright, now we go back to the factories in the valley because all there was the Organ Factory and

those canneries and rock crushers and that's all. This PE ran along Glendale to Burbank. People started working in Los Angeles. All the people come and a lot of people work. So now they don't want to live in the same old, they want to live in a new area. So they built new apartments, a lot of new apartments and new houses. Everything was subdivision. So the first place of course the place was Glendale. So Glendale advertised all over the United States they had ads all over the place. The fastest growing city in the United States.

DODSON: Yes, I knew they were using that slogan.

RATNER: A 100,000 people they had there. And then you'd get on the street car because this was the bedroom for Los Angeles. I think it was $.20 or something and they'd come out and get off and go to the apartment houses and pick up a car or whatever it is or walk to the apartment you see. So now that same street car would go on to after everybody got off and you'd see people riding in it a five people and they'd go on to Burbank. So when they got to Burbank so after a while my father said, "Well, don't people come out here?" "Why should they drive another 10 or 15 minutes on a street car and move out in Burbank and it isn't good." So he said, "We got to do something

to get the people to come." Because it was...so he said...he figured it out, if you have a factory and people work...you know they're going to live right close to the factory. You hire people 50 an hour, that would be 50 houses you know there. So they all got together and said well, we got to start factories. So how now they started factories in those days. So how would they get factories so there was a room in Los Angeles, they weren't crowded so they could build there. So they got together this. In the meantime, there was a trucking company called Whatmoreland Truck Company. He was assembling trucks. You General Motors wasn't making trucks in those days. And the rest of them they weren't making. They were making passenger cars and so on. But these different ones that assembled and made the truck out of parts, this Moreland, this Whatmoreland he was very successful so he outgrew whatever is at the time he wanted to expand. So they went to him and they said, "Here, we got a good place for you to come." And here they gave him something like 15 acres, right there they gave him 15 acres and they said you won't have to pay no taxes for a long time and so on. And we got water for you and there's lights and everything and then on top of that, they bought stock in the company you see. They took the business around and

had them buy stock...this is how they got big. So got Whatmoreland to go. So now then he built the first industrial...actually the industrial factory here in the valley. And that factory is still there. It's still standing.

DODSON: I see. Where is it located?

RATNER: You should drive to Burbank. It's called San Fernando Road. You go down to Alameda Street. It's called Alameda, you just turn to the right. Right on the corner of Alameda, you go first of all Alameda is only...after you go about a block in a half, two blocks, there's freeway, you go under the freeway, but before you go under the freeway, but once you leave San Fernando Road on the right hand side you see a whole block, a whole row or block you know it's about 500 or 600 feet of a building. You see you sort of figure out, I wonder what the building is for. It's a low building, it's not a high building, rock building, like brick and you see like units. It's where they use to assemble things. The doors are right at each building. And you figure well it must be for some purpose. But that was built in 60 years ago and still used today. Now by that company. It was sold...the last 20 years it was a biscuit factory and something and cannery and

so on but the building is still there. Now that was the first one. Now after that came, that encouraged Burbank for industry. So then they advertised and they formed other...they invited other companies to come. They got the idea, now we got to have some more factories. Because you still had the street car coming out. So then more factories came and how they got these other factories, is that they had to buy stock. See people bought stock and give them a piece of land. This is how they started you see. Otherwise, I happen to know they sold stock, they weren't allowed to buy stock, the business people had to buy stock. My father had to buy stock. Now you wonder, where's Lockheed. See how big they are. In those days, they weren't so big. They started out in the depression, right in the depression. In the '30s, a small factory. How did they and why did they pick Burbank? Now I was at a luncheon, a rotary, I belonged to the Rotary. I was at a Rotary meeting and somebody from Lockheed goes to get up and was getting pictures and telling all about the story and they were celebrating their 50th anniversary in Burbank. So ? I says, "50 years ago." ? I looked around...? but it wasn't 50 years but he decided it was 50 years. So he was only about 45 years. They picked...

DODSON: They picked a nice round figure.

RATNER: Yeah, they picked a round figure. Because I remember you know I started, and how it went out, one of these companies that had the airplane machine shop and so on, they went broke. Then it was broke, it was for sale, they had to sell it to somebody. They used it so they came along and they bought it so this is how it happened. I guess he was financed by the people that bought stock along Burbank.

DODSON: Well, wasn't there a man named Lockheed too?

RATNER: No, their name was...it was two brothers. This shows when it went broke and this was...in 1933. See right during the depression, a couple years and this is when Lockheed bought them out. So this is when Lockheed...but actually it was the old timers around that bought stock. Though they lost money from the stock, you know on different things, but in the long run it built up you see. That's the story of industry in Burbank in the valley.

LAWTON: Wonderful.

RATNER: There's another man, I don't know if you...he was our first councilman in the valley. Councilman Randall, Charles Randall?

DODSON: I haven't come across his name. Is he still alive?

RATNER: No he died some years ago. But there's something that you should have on...that's something that should be written about. Then there's nobody around that actually knew about the ? That's some interesting stories there, Charles Randall. That really should be written up and also about this Dr. Hansen.

DODSON: Yes, I'm glad you put us on the trail of that.

RATNER: Those two...the first councilman. When you go to Van Nuys you go into City Hall. He's the one that built the City Hall, you'll see his name under that. He was a councilman and president of the council and so on. He actually ran the city of Los Angeles for about 10 or 12 years. You say you've been in Los Angeles since '50?

DODSON: Well, I first came out here into the valley about 1949.

RATNER: Well, that's 30 years. You know different mayors. That's an interesting story about the mayors. You know that story about Mark and Pollard? Written up in the valley?

DODSON: I know the name. Of course I didn't know...

RATNER: That you should...that should be your number one. That's the man that was called Mr. San Fernando Valley.

DODSON: I see Pollard. Martin Pollard.

RATNER: I could give you enough...

Transcribed by Blue Ribbon Secretarial - 3/22/99